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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH ADMINISTRATION  
BUREAU OF ENTOMOLOGY AND PLANT QUARANTINE  
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

July 1947

DDT for the Control of Clothes Moths and Carpet Beetles

There are indications that DDT may be used successfully for controlling clothes moths and carpet beetles. Further investigations will be necessary before we will have all the information required to make definite recommendations. At the present time we are suggesting that a 5-percent solution of DDT in deodorized kerosene may be used to spray on closet surfaces, around baseboards, on floors, on carpets, or on other surfaces where the insects are developing or where they will come in contact with the DDT deposit that is left after the liquid has evaporated.

The DDT has no fumigating effect and insects which remain in unsprayed places or on fabrics which have not been treated will not be affected. They must contact the deposit in order to be killed. Death will not occur immediately after this contact, but will come about several hours later. Carpet beetle larvae are killed more slowly than some other insects and in some cases may not die until 10 days to 2 weeks after their original exposure to DDT. During this time, however, it can be observed that they are not normal and the indications are that all feeding has been stopped.

The spray should be applied only in sufficient quantity to moisten the surface which is being treated. One thorough application will be effective for a period of from several weeks to several months, so frequent treatments are not necessary.

Where carpet beetle larvae are living in cracks in the flooring special attention should be paid to spraying the solution in these places. A 10-percent DDT powder can also be applied by means of a hand duster so the powder can be blown into the cracks. This treatment can be used under carpets where the white deposit of the powder will not be objectionable. The dust can also be blown behind baseboards and into other cracks and crevices that would be difficult to treat with a spray.

DDT shows promise as a mothproofing treatment, but here again additional work is required to determine the best solvent, the optimum strength of the solution, and the best method of treating fabrics in order to deposit the necessary amount of DDT in the fibers. Until these factors are determined we are suggesting that a 5-percent solution of DDT in deodorized kerosene can be sprayed onto fabrics. This solution will not injure any fabrics upon which an ordinary fly spray could be used with safety.



An excessive application may leave a visible deposit of DDT in dark fabrics. This is not a permanent injury, however, and can be removed by dry cleaning. In some cases brushing will remove a visible frosty bloom which may appear after the spray has dried.

Since the oil is inflammable the spraying should not be done near an open fire. If the oil solution gets on the skin of the operator it should be washed off after the spraying is completed. After the oil has dried, the DDT deposit is not harmful.



